

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for associating a credibility rating with a document located in an online search comprising:

an information gathering device adapted to retrieve the document from an information source;

an information analysis device adapted to determine an online id associated with the document; and

a credibility rating system adapted to provide the credibility rating associated with the online id to the information analysis device, wherein a user can access the credibility rating associated with the document.

2. The system of claim 1 further comprising a searchable index adapted to store an association of the credibility rating of the online id with the document, wherein the association is accessible by a search engine.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the searchable index is adapted to map a unique identifier associated with the document to the associated credibility rating.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the document is a web page and the web page has a unique identifier comprising a uniform resource locator ("URL").

5. The system of claim 1 wherein the online search is an Internet search and the document is retrieved from the Internet.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein the credibility rating system comprises:

a user interface adapted to allow an owner of the online id to input information into the credibility rating system that can be validated and write the information into a credibility database wherein the information is stored and associated with the online id;

an input validator coupled to the user interface and adapted to verify that the input by the owner is correct and to determine the credibility rating, the credibility rating reflecting the input; and

an application service interface adapted to allow a third party to access the credibility rating stored in the credibility rating system.

7. The system of claim 6 wherein the user interface further comprises:

a profiling interface adapted to allow a mapping of the online id to an online credibility rating;

a rating import module adapted to allow rating information from outside sources to be linked to the credibility database; and

a message rating interface adapted to allow the online id to input statements related to a validity of the document and determine a weight of the statement based on a statement analysis, the weight of the statement being used by the input validator to determine the credibility rating.

8. The system of claim 6 further comprising a message posting module coupled to the credibility database and adapted to allow the online id to distribute a message linked to the credibility rating and document to third parties.

9. The system of claim 7 further comprising an application access point coupled to the credibility database adapted to allow a third party to submit a query for the credibility rating associated with the online id.

10. A credibility rating system comprising:

a user interface adapted to allow an owner of an online id to input credibility information associated with a document into the system for validation;

an input validator coupled to the user interface and adapted to verify that the inputted credibility information is correct and to rate the inputted credibility information in the form of a credibility rating;

a credibility database adapted to store the on-line identifier and the associated credibility rating; and

an application service interface adapted to allow a third party to access the credibility rating from the credibility database.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein the user interface further comprises:

a profiling interface adapted to allow a mapping of the author identifier to an online credibility rating;

a rating import module adapted to allow rating information from outside sources to be linked to the credibility rating in the credibility database; and

a message rating interface adapted to determine a weight of the inputted credibility information based on a statement analysis of the inputted information.

12. The system of claim 10 further comprising a message posting module coupled to the credibility database and adapted to allow the author to distribute a message linked to the credibility rating and document to third parties.

13. The system of claim 11 further comprising an application access point coupled to the credibility database adapted to allow a third party to submit a query for the credibility rating associated with an online identifier.

14. A method of associating a credibility rating to a document retrieved in an Internet search comprising the steps of:

determining an online id associated with the document;

retrieving a credibility rating from a credibility rating system for the online id; and

associating the credibility rating with the document.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the step of determining an online id of a document comprises the step of extracting an author information code from a header tag of an HTML document.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of developing a credibility rating for an online id, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an input from the online id related to a credibility profile for the online id;

validating the input by determining a weight of the input;

assigning the credibility rating to the online id; and

storing the credibility rating in a searchable index.

17. The method of claim 15 further comprising the step of integrating the credibility rating vector into a search engine using a ranking algorithm.

18. The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of reordering a search result list comprising a list of documents returned from the Internet search relative to the credibility rating associated with each document.

19. The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of displaying a symbol on the information indicating the quality rating to the user.

20. A computer program product comprising:

a computer useable medium having a computer readable code device embodied therein for causing a computer to associate a credibility rating with a document located in an online search, the computer readable code device in the computer program product comprising:

a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to retrieve the document from an information source;

a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to determine an online id associated with the document; and

a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to retrieve a credibility rating associated with the online id and allow a user to access the credibility rating.

21. The computer program product of claim 20 further comprising:

a computer useable medium having computer readable code device embodied therein for causing a computer to

allow an owner of the online id to formulate the credibility rating for the online id, the computer readable code device in the computer program product comprising:

- a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to allow the owner of the online id to input information into the system that can be validated and write the information into a credibility database wherein the information is stored and associated with the online id;
- a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to verify that the input by the owner is correct and determine the credibility rating based on the input; and
- a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to allow a third party to access the credibility rating stored in the credibility rating system.

22. An article of manufacture comprising:

- a computer useable medium having a computer readable program code device embodied therein for causing a computer to associate a credibility rating with a document located in an online search, the computer readable code device in the article of manufacture comprising:



- a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to retrieve the document from an information source;
- a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to determine an online id associated with the document; and
- a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to retrieve a credibility rating associated with the online id and allow a user to access the credibility rating.

23. The article of manufacture of claim 22 further comprising:

- a computer useable medium having a computer readable program code device embodied therein for causing a computer to allow an owner of the online id to develop a credibility rating profile for the online id, the computer readable code device in the article of manufacture comprising:
  - a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to allow the owner of the online id to input information into the system that can be validated and write the information into a credibility database wherein the information is stored and associated with the online id;
  - a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to verify that the input by the owner

is correct and to determine the credibility rating relative to the input; and

a computer readable program code device for causing a computer to allow a third party to access the credibility rating stored in the credibility rating system.